

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on:
House Bill 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
February 16, 2022**

Good afternoon/evening, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Rebecca Allen and I am the Director of Recovery Advocacy for the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery also known as CCAR. I am a woman in long-term recovery and what that means to me is that it's been over 24 years since the last time I used heroin. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed state budget as it pertains to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

CCAR is funded by DMHAS and we provide non-clinical, community-based recovery support services. We operate 5 Recovery Community Centers in CT; Hartford, Windham, Manchester, Bridgeport and New Haven. These centers are safe spaces that provide non-judgemental supports and resources for individual seeking or that are in recovery. In 2021, despite being in a global pandemic, our 5 centers had over 17,350 visits from 6,392 individuals that were seeking support for their own or a loved one's addiction.

CCAR also provides Recovery Coaching to hospital emergency departments and to the CT Department of Correction (DOC). Recovery Coaches are persons with lived experience of substance use disorders. They are trained to use that lived experience to form meaningful connections in order to help individuals initiate and/or maintain their recovery. Our Recovery Coaches currently respond to 22 of the 34 CT hospitals, 7 correctional facilities and 5 district parole offices. Our coaches meet with both the individual and their family. They support and empower individuals to initiate their recovery by connecting to treatment if desired, and provide followup to make a connection to the greater recovery community. In 2021, our ED Recovery Coaches responded to over 5,600 calls and have a 82% connect to care rate. Our DOC Coaches have been able to support over 282 individuals with recovery supports including providing a safety net and seamless transition for individuals on Medication for Opioid Use Disorders during the re-entry process.

What I want to emphasize with this committee is that despite the increase in overdoses and the number of individuals suffering from substance use disorders, people are still finding Recovery. People of every race, age and socio-economic background. People whose family and loved ones had given up on them. People who have cycled in and out of various treatment programs and other institutions. I know that recovery is possible for anyone, because I get the privilege of witnessing it each and every day. I'm asking this committee to increase funding to DMHAS so they can fund additional Recovery Community Centers and make recovery support services assesible to all CT communities.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Allen

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